

Town Hall
Meeting - February 7, 2000

Q: Has there been any thought at things that worked or didn't work for the Laboratory?
Did you seek any external models? Or are we starting with a clean slate?

A: We spent a lot of time looking into industrial companies such as Dupont and Dow Chemical. In addition, the ISM principles and models are guiding us. DOE consideration put a somewhat different spin. AWE, the British nuclear agency, has been engaged in moving toward our model and has been a resource for us through Ian Deverdoux, member of our Division Review Committee. AWE proposed to divest its safety assets over a 2-year period and is well into implementation.

Q: How do we assess customer needs and expectations?

A: We are engaging our customers throughout the process. Our approach includes individual interviews, inclusion of customers at our retreat, presentation along the way to the DLDOPS, OWG and eventually the senior executive team.

Q: Is DOE similar to NASA in that it created a disaster by thinking the faster, cheaper, better concept.

A: Our current deployed approach is working well and we must keep in mind that DOE is different from NASA. Giving organizations the decision to buy or make what they need. The biggest price is health physics and RCTs. We are focusing application of our services where they are needed – primarily at the line level. Our current experience with deployment is the line tends to recognize the need for more rather than less resources, at least initially. In the short run, we have evidence that cost will be significantly reduced.

Q: Do we have a role in clarifying institutional needs? Are we looking only to areas of operations and relying on Labs perceptions?

A: We will continue our role to interpret laws and establish requirements for internal implementation. Yes, we are staying within our current span of control. We must recognize that perceptions are reality to those who have them and some of the have validity. We will be developing better ways to communicate who we are and what we bring to the Laboratory.

Q: Are we going back towards that corporate model which have caused problems before?

A: The corporate model gives us a guide to serve the customer on their terms, a key objective. Implementation must consider what we have learned from other experiences.

Q: What if an employee gets put in Operational Assurance and that employee may or may not agree? Has there been any thought to see what an employee feels or wants?

A: We will have transition efforts to trade off with integrity. When resolution between organizations is needed we will have an issues resolution process. Such issues are extremely important to us and need to be brought to our attention. Our key principle is the integrity of operating lines and having the same standards for everyone.

Q: Have operating divisions defined what they need in terms of ES&H services? Are we providing guidance? Are we providing structure?

A: In the core function lies the final opinion. We will supply our own people to serve customers, possibly with centralized pools. We will continue to supply people to the Laboratory. Working out specific needs is a part of the divestment process.

Q: Isn't there a risk with deployed line versus institutional objective line? Is there a risk going towards large deployment.

A: The Lab wasn't mature two years ago. Now we have a different level of expectation through the LIRs and have achieved a more accountable environment. We have a system that is self-reinforced. We need to deliver on expectations regardless of the set of things that we have to do. This is how real companies work. They have real formalities, real expectations established with control feedback in return. We must comply with the law.

Q: Are we cutting down on manpower? This has not worked with PTLA. For example: portable palm readers.

A: We are not cutting back on manpower; in fact we might need more.